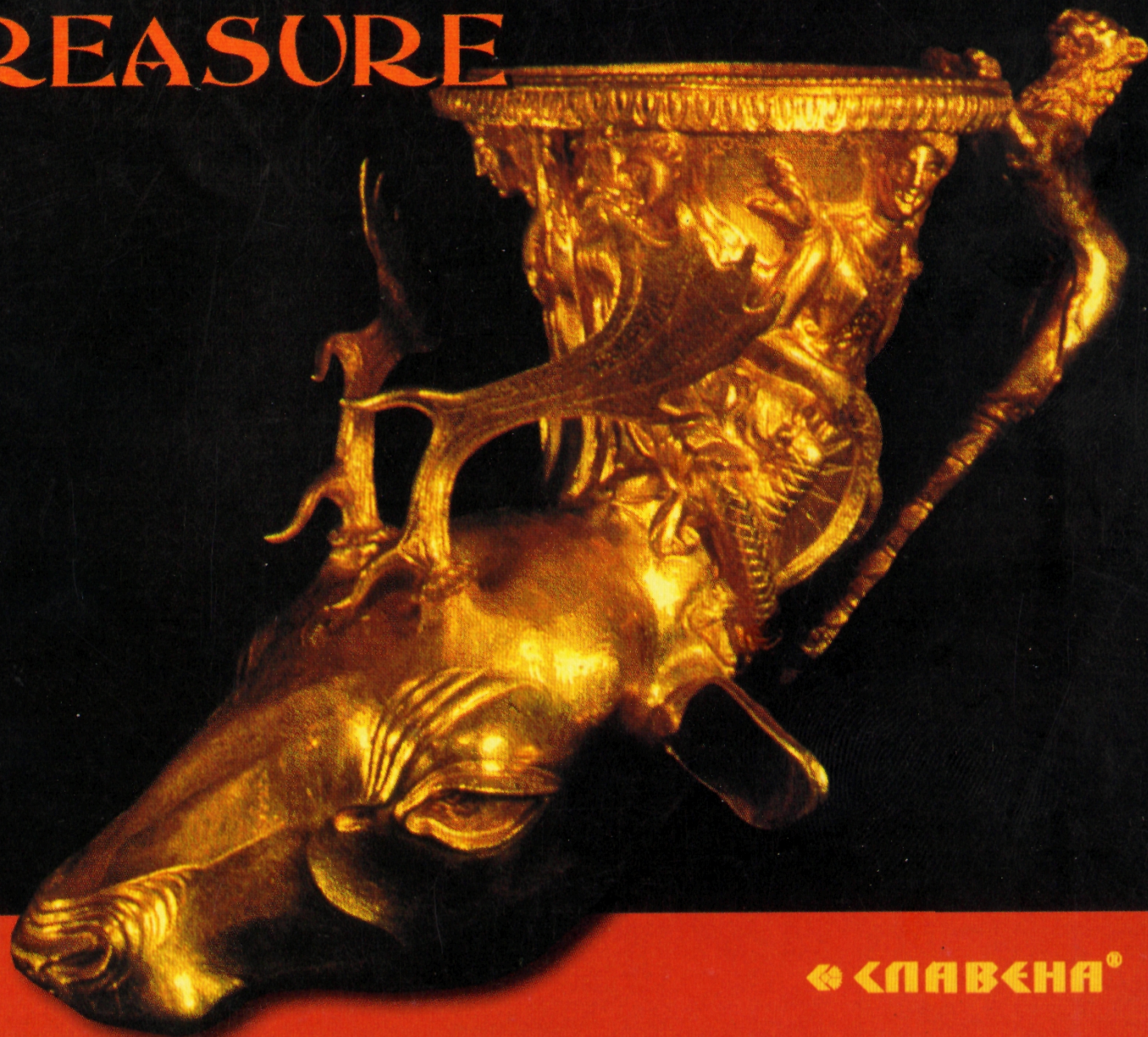


Georgi Kitov

THE PANAGYURISHTE TREASURE



«КНАБЕНА»®

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE LIBRARY

Georgi Kitov

**THE
PANAGYURISHTE
TREASURE**

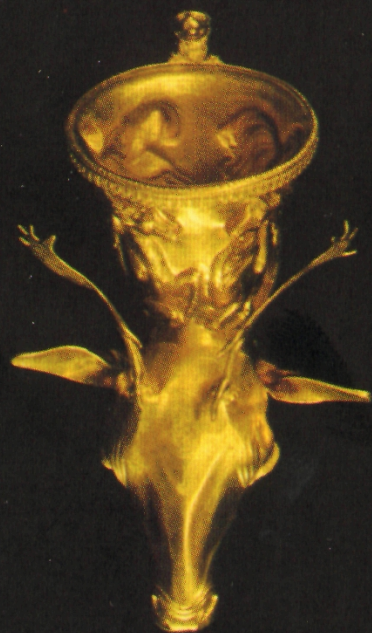
◀ **SLAVENA®**

2003



Georgi Kitov

THE PANAGYURISHTE TREASURE



As result of strange coincidence of historical circumstances, the oldest known by science people who inhabited the Bulgarian lands, the Thracians, were the last to be discovered compared to all the rest. Deprived of their own written tradition, they cannot tell us anything about themselves, about their history, religion and culture. Their neighbours, like all neighbours, treated them sometimes with benevolence, sometimes with hostility, but more often with undervaluation, thus blurring, rather than elucidating, the idea about the Thracians, imposing the impression that this people lived a quiet and monotonous life in the shadow of the ancient Greek civilization to the south and the world of the Scythians to the north. This is why it was no wonder that when slightly more than fifty years ago the world heard about the discovery in the heart of Thrace of one of the most remarkable ever gold treasures, the

one from Panagyurishte (Fig.1), it struck nobody's mind that it could be connected with the Thracians and their culture. But how the Panagyurishte treasure actually appeared?

Its discovery was accidental and was accompanied by all those strange and curious circumstances which mark most of the unique discoveries in archaeology. It all happened on December 8th 1949, Thursday. Just an ordinary frosty week day for the ceramic factory "Merul" located in the southeastern suburbs (Figs.2, 3) of a completely unknown then, but now thriving and popular in the whole civilized world, small town of Panagyurishte. The three Deykovi brothers (Fig.4), Pavel/1906-1988/, Petko/1908-1974/ and Mihail/1915-1988/ were digging clay for bricks in the factory's yard. Until that moment fortune had not been very generous to them. Some unknown prophecy, however, made each of them have a daughter named

Zlatka /meaning in Bulgarian "made of gold"/. Without suspecting that on that very day their names, together with their daughters', would enter the Bulgarian and world archaeology, they cleaned with curiosity the soil-stuck yellowish objects who suddenly appeared in their hands. After a short discussion between themselves, they unanimously concluded: "These surely are hidden Gipsy musical instruments!"

The distance of time does not allow us to reconstruct in detail the further events. Two versions seem to be the most plausible. According to one of them, told to me by the late Dr. Petar Gorbanov, "the instruments" were put carelessly aside not to obstruct the further digging. But, as the ancient people used to say, "Fama volant", i.e. rumour spreads very fast. The dull life of the small town was struck by that discovery. A curious line-up passed through

the factory's yard, dozens of hands touched the strange objects, dozens of eyes scrutinized them with astonishment. Some of the most curious even tried to extract a sound from the miniature openings of the instruments and, nodding with disappointment, announced the practical uselessness of the "the gipsy music". Among all those curious people it was Dr. Petar Gorbanov, nick-named "the Chief" (Fig.5), an archaeologist who worked then in the reading society club of the town, who threw the apple of discord to the public by not sharing the conclusions of the first finders. In the evening the nine gold vessels were displayed in a hastily hewn show case in the town centre and almost the whole population lined up to see them.

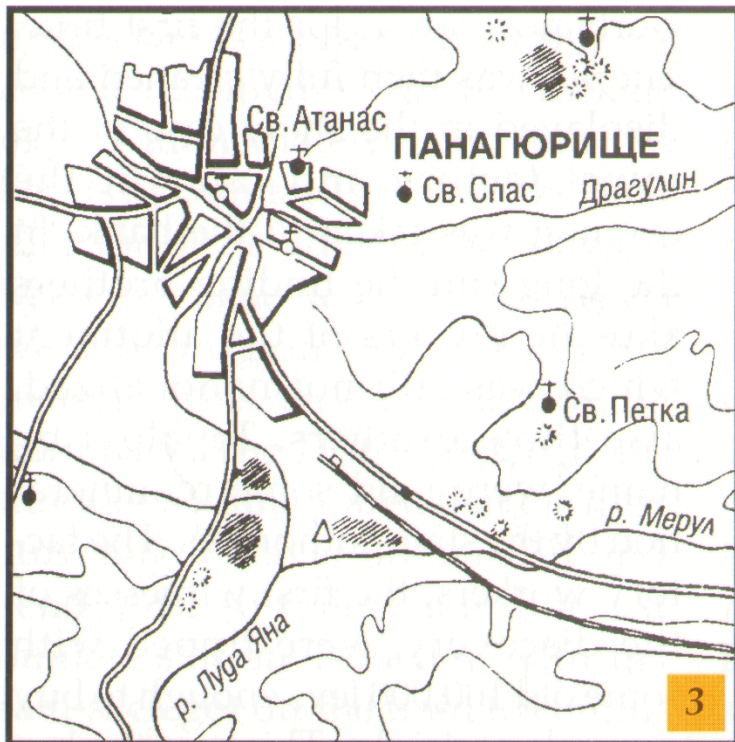
The other version, provided by the first finders and the then head of people's district council Stefan Kalpakov, was presented by Atanas Atanasov, a former Panagyurishte

6

museum director, at the second international symposium "The Panagyurishte Treasure and Toreutics in Thrace" on December 1999. According to it, the discovery was made by 10 o'clock in the morning in a depth of about 2 m. We may presume that the measurement made by the oldest brother Pavel, who was the one to cite the above figure, was not correct. He simply thought that, since the previous year they had dug about 1.6m layer of clay, in the year in question they must have dug some 30-40cm more before reaching the vessels. It is not possible however that such a thick layer of clayish soil could have piled up from antiquity to present day. Pavel says: "Petko was digging with the shovel when I saw something glittering which must have been the "tray"/ *phiale*/ and I said we should see just now what was that, and the three of us clustered together, and Petko reached at 40cm behind it and clay-

ish soil opened like a lid, even the figures were imprinted on the piece of clay, and when we saw it, it "turned out" to be pure gold and then we thought: "This thing should go right to the museum". According to the oldest brother, the *phiale* was at the bottom, the *amphora-rhyton* was inside it and around it the other vessels were arranged. (This is hard to believe and it casts shadow on some other controversial and curious statements made by the finders and the head of the peoples' district council.)

Workers from the factory came around and one of them tried to steal one of the vessels but was stopped from doing it by the brothers. Then they went to the nearby small river to wash the vessels, took them home to boast of them in front of their wives and children. Later, dressed-up like on a festive day, they took the treasure in their market bag to the District Council. It was there that



Legend

- ⊛ - Thracian mound
- - Ancient settlement
- △ - Site where treasure has been discovered

3. Plan of the region of Panagyurishte marking the place of discovery.



2. The place of discovery of the treasure.



4. The discoverers, Deikovi brothers, standing by the show-case with the vessels.



5

5. Petar Gorbanov,
the first scholar who appreciated
the importance of the treasure.



6

6. The front page of the Canadian Newspaper
Le Journal de Montreal with materials
about the Panagtyurishte treasure, 1987.

Gorbanov saw it for the first time. The set was then fully cleaned and displayed in the show case of the towel factory and later in the evening was taken to the bank. In the long run the finding brothers and the owners of the allotment which was still not nationalized, also three brothers, Topalovi by name, were paid some remuneration by the state authorities. The factory workers, the first witnesses of the discovery, were tipped with some old 100,000 leva enough to buy a couple of drinks. This was the last uneventful day of the new life of the treasure which from now on would be watched out by armed guards and kept in special safes with intrigue alarm installations.

On the following day, Friday, cables were hastily wired to Sofia and Plovdiv, announcing the sensational discovery. The message, however, was received by Prof. Dimitar Dimitrov, the then director of Sofia Archaeological Institute and Muse-

um, as late as Monday. The cable received in Plovdiv was the luckier one. It immediately came into the hands of Dimitar Tsonchev, the then director of Plovdiv Archaeological Museum, who without any delay went to Panagyurishte, collected the treasure in his ram-sack and took the train back. The District Council authorities became scared that the treasure might travel unguarded and send a car to follow the train. At Smilets station Tsonchev with his ram-sack got off the train to continue by car his way to Plovdiv, where the treasure was supposed to be studied and "temporarily displayed" before its return to Panagyurishte. Nobody, of course, in the big town had ever thought of returning the treasure to its "birth place." Thus, once and for all, was decided the question of the permanent address of the Panagyurishte treasure and this is how it became a property of the People's Archaeolog-

ical Museum in Plovdiv. After spending about fifteen years in its permanent home, a transparent safety show-case in the central hall of the museum, it made its first appearance in the early 1960-ies as part of a national exhibition shown in Rome where it was a genuine sensation. Then followed trips to Paris, Munich, Leningrad, Budapest, Warsaw, Montreal (1961 and 1969) (Fig.6.). After another three years spent in Plovdiv, the Pangyurishte gold treasure was selected as the main exhibit in a representative national exposition "Thracian Art" first shown in Sofia on the occasion of the First International Congress of Thracology held in 1972, then was exhibited in Paris, Moscow and Leningrad (present day Saint Petersburg), then was returned to Sofia for a while, and in the course of many years it was displayed all around the world: Vienna, Warsaw, Mexico, Havana, New York, Boston, Tokyo,

Osaka, Belgrade, Prague, Bratislava, London, Budapest, Cologne, Munich, Montreal and other international centres of culture. In the period between 1994 and 2000 the exhibition visited 7 cities in Japan, and 7 in the United States, went to Finland, Sweden, Italy, Belgium. The treasure, together with some other monuments of Thracian art, provoked the admiration of the world cultural community and made the words "Bulgaria", "Panagyurishte" and "Thracians" pronounced as often as never before. The traditional concept of Bulgaria as a communist country dealing with drug traffic and arms trade became to crack. The world came to know that, together with Greece and Italy, this country is the richest in Europe in finds from Antiquity with high artistic value. The Panagyurishte gold treasure made such an impression upon the Americans that they provided in Boston a separate hall for it in which every vessel was displayed in an in-

dividual show-case. When at home, the treasure occupies one of the central halls of the National Museum of History in Sofia.

It is perhaps because of the many trips abroad and the inclusion in many catalogues that the treasure has not been published in Bulgarian editions in the last 30 or 40 years and the old albums and publications have long run out.

The Panagyurishte gold treasure consists of nine richly decorated vessels made of solid gold, its total weight being 6 kg and 164 gr. The largest vessel is the amphoraryton, seven are rhytons, three of them shaped like animals' heads, and one shaped like a goat's *protome* (the front part of the body), three shaped like female heads, and one phiale.

It seems that the set have been used for drinking of wine in a religious, ceremonial or even everyday surrounding. There is also the opinion that it was designed for ritual

purifying of liquid, wine most probably, by pouring it from one vessel into another. Whatever the case, there is a predominant supposition that the set is not a full one. There must have been two more rhytons with animals' protome, one amphora and one or two phiales. This supposition is supported by the sacral meaning of the number 3 in the Thracian religion and also by the ever more popular statement that the Thracian treasures were not simply treasures but were offerings to



7

7. The amphora-rhyton.

8. Floral ornament
on the upper rim
of the central band.



8



9

9. The figure of centaur on the handle.

the gods of the earth and the sun and were buried in two parts.

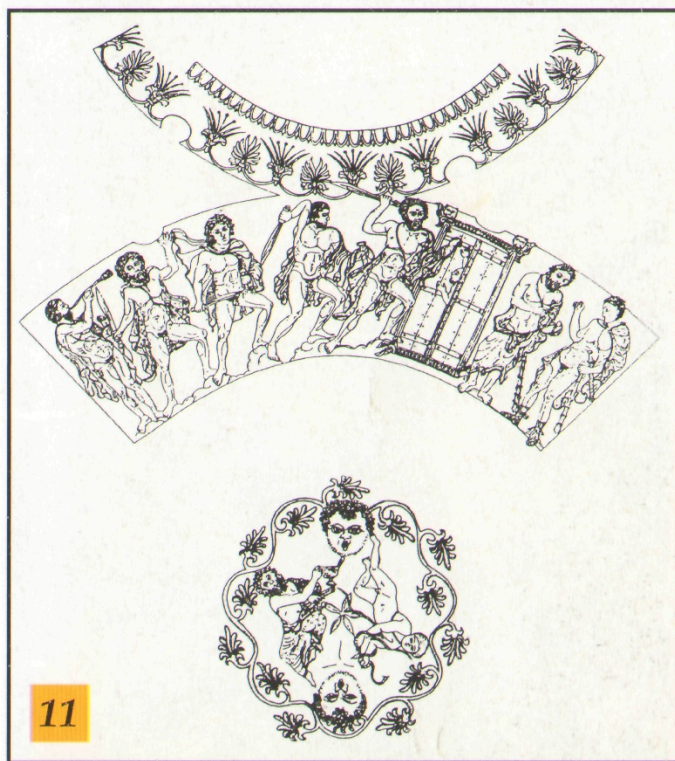
The largest, the most interesting and the most important vessel of all is the amphora-rhyton (Fig.7) which, because of the two openings in the bottom, is believed to have been used for friend-making ritual: two men could drink from it simultaneously or could pour themselves the liquid by placing under it another two vessels. The amphora has an egg-shaped body, elegant neck and two handles modelled as bodies of centaurs (Fig.9). The walls and the bottom depict two scenes (Fig.11) di-

10



10. Scene on the bottom of the vessel: the young Heracles throttles the snakes.

vided by floral ornaments (Fig.8). The one at the bottom presents the young Heracles who throttles the two snakes (Fig.10), one lying, obviously drunken, bearded satyr (Fig.12) and two Negro's heads with pierced mouths (Fig.13) through which the liquid is poured. The modelling of the decoration at the bottom is more carelessly and unprofessionally done compared to the one on the body, which brings the supposition that the two scenes have not been worked out by the same master.



11

11. Two-dimensional view of the figures on the walls of amphora-rhyton.



12

12. Bearded satyr on the bottom.



13. Negro's head with opening
for pouring the liquid.

14. The entrance of
Strelcha mound-mausoleum.

The composition on the walls is developed around an exquisitely depicted double-winged door (Fig.15) "carpentered" from wooden planks "affixed" with iron nails whose round heads go in rows. The wings and the roof slab have incised ornaments which so much resemble the decoration of the Strelcha mound-mausoleum (Fig.14) that we can def-



initely presuppose that the artist must have had in mind this very mound, or a similar one. All the more that in the spring of 2000 near the village of Starosel, at some 15 km to the east of Strelcha, a Thracian temple was discovered whose entrances to the two premises are covered with similar ornaments. The partially reconstructed stone gates



15. The gate of Thracian temple
in the central scene on the walls
of the amphora-rhyton.

16. One of the stone gates
in the temple at Starosel.



17. *First warrior
in the central scene.*

17

(Fig.16) do not differ substantially from the ones depicted on the vessel's walls. Through the slightly open wings of the door on the amphora from Panagtyurishte is protruding the head of small bold human creature. On the left side of the door there are five men in a row (Figs.17-21), half-naked, bare-footed, walking, or running, on a rough surface to the door . All of them, with the exception of the middle one (Fig.18), are bearded. The last one has a trumpet in his mouth (Fig.21), producing a signal or just playing. The others are armed and are vigor-



18

19. *Second warrior.*

20. *Fourth warrior and trumpeter.*



19



20

ously waving their swords. The dynamic impression in the left scene is in sharp contract with the tranquility in the right one: an old man speaks with an almost beardless youth (Fig.22). Both of them are leaning on roughly-hewn sticks, the young one wears sandals (Fig.23). They seem to be discussing something connected with an obscure object in the old man's left hand to which the young one has undecidedly stretched out his right hand.

The interpretation of the scenes on the walls of the amphora-rhyton

21. Trumpeter.

22. Priests inside the temple.



has divided the researchers of the Panagyurishte treasure into several groups. The interpretations vary a great deal one from another: to start with, an everyday surroundings (a drunken company has dashed off into the night to look for a girl); a military one (the capture of the Persian Gate by Alexander the Great), in which, according to the Italian scholar H.E. del Medico, the beardless young warrior in the left scene portrays the leader himself; and finally, the mythological one (the siege of fortified walls, as retold



23

23. Young priest's feet with sandals.

24. Scene with two men caught in conversation from the wall paintings of the temple in Ostrusha mound near the town of Shipka.



24

by the myth about *The Seven against Thebes*.

The discovery of the Strelcha tomb-mausoleum, and now the temple near Starosel, yield some arguments in favour of a new interpretation. It says that the scene presents Thracian ritual practices. The door in the middle must be an entrance of a Thracian temple used for the burial of a Thracian ruler who was worshipped after his death. The warriors on the left must be dancing a ritual dance under the musician's accompaniment. The two men



25. Rhyton shaped
as young ram's head.

26. Front view of the rhyton.

25

26

on the right are actually inside the temple and are preparing the burial ceremony, whereas the small bold man must be the doorman of the temple who peeps out to see if the dance has already finished in order to invite the participants in the ceremony to come inside. This interpretation has been supported little by little by written sources, familiar dancing scenes from ceramic vessels, in-laid pictures on the entrance of the tomb-mausoleum in Sashova mound near the town of Shipka, the wall-paintings in the Thracian temple of Sabazius in Ostrusha mound



(Fig. 24), also near Shipka. We should also not disregard the fact that in the scene of the burial feast in Kazanlushka mound there are two standing women who play the flute or some similar musical instrument.

The amphora-rhyton is one of the most representative works of ancient art and if the hypothesis of its local origin may be proved, which becomes ever more convincing, the

value of the Thracian art tradition will enjoy a greater respect.

The first rhyton of the set is shaped as a young ram with slightly grown horns (Figs.25, 26). Its neck is of conical shape and ends with a down turned rim covered with floral decoration. The head is masterly modelled (Fig.27). There is an opening in the animal's mouth for pouring the liquid. The handle ends with the body of a lion whose forepaws

27. Detail of ram's head.



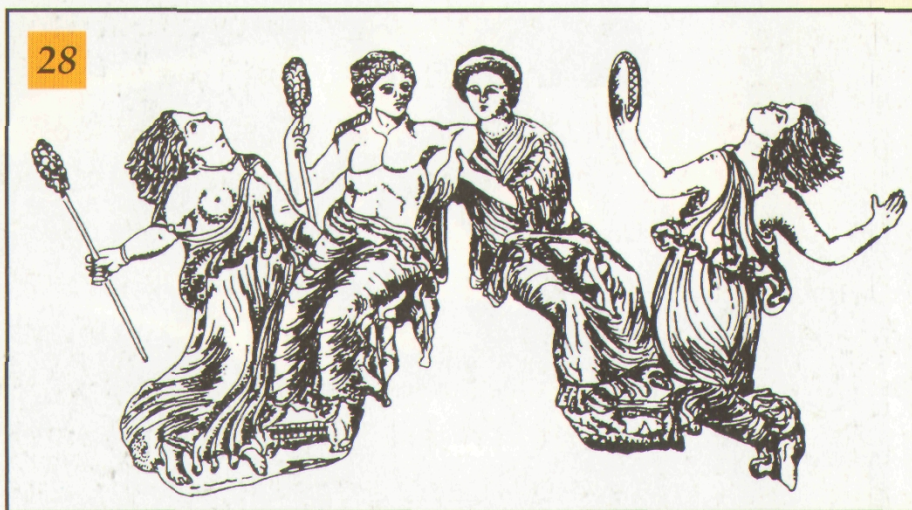
27

rest on the mouth-rim. The neck is covered with high quality relief decoration consisting of four figures (Fig.28): two maenads entranced by dancing (Fig.29), a man and another woman. The inscription in dots above their heads says that these are the God of wine and merry-making Dionysus and the Nymph Eriope.

The other two rhytons are both with antler's heads and very elaborately modelled big horns. Both handles end with the body of a lion whose forepaws rest on the mouth-rim.



29



28

28. Two-dimensional view of the scenes on the neck.

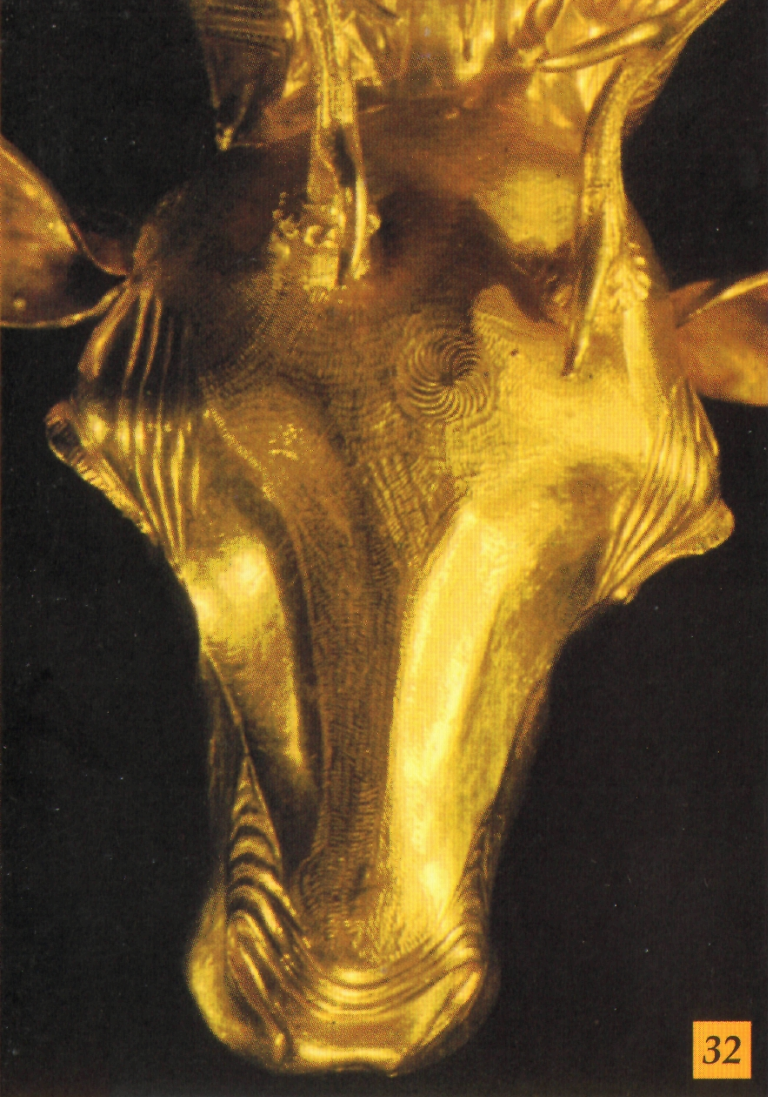
29. Dancing maenad from the scene on the neck.

30. The first antler's head-shaped rhyton.

31. Two-dimensional view of the figures on the neck.



What makes these two rhytons different is the decoration on their necks. The first one (Fig.30) illustrates the popular story from the Greek mythology about the Judgment of Paris (Fig.31), also known by the name Alexander, which caused the burst of the Trojan War. The importance of the event is emphasized by using the typical for the Thracian art solar disc on the animal's forehead (Fig.32). The hero was supposed to choose among the



32

32. Head of the antler with
rotating solar disc
on its forehead.

33. Shielded Goddess of wisdom Athena.



33

34



34. Judgement Paris:
the Goddess of love Aphrodite.

35



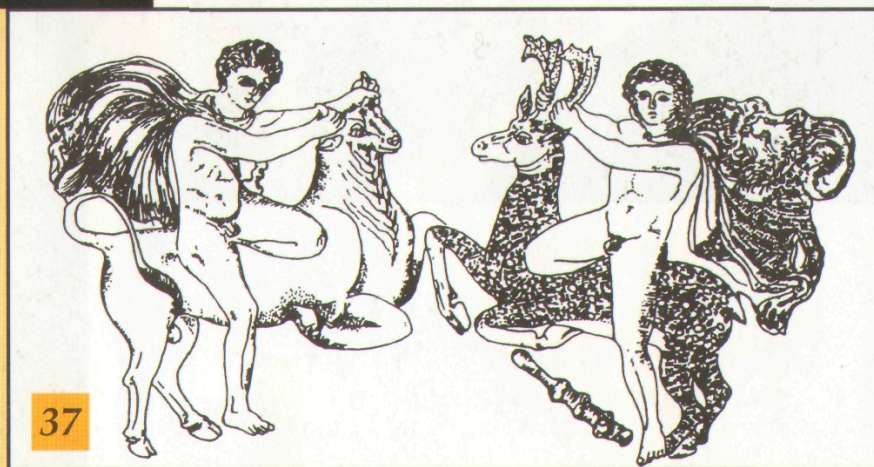
35. Lower end of the handle
with depiction of female head.



36

three goddesses: Athena (Fig.33), Hera and Aphrodite, in order to award the most beautiful one with the golden apple. Paris chose the goddess of love and beauty (Fig.34) who gave him as reward Helen of Troy to be his wife. This kindled not only the war but also the wrath of the two neglected goddesses. With the exception of the awarded Aphrodite, all the figures are seated. Their clothing is depicted in great detail, with all natural curves, jewellery and the typical for everyone attributes. Even though easily recognizable, there is a dotted inscrip-

36. Front view of the second rhyton shaped as antler's head.



37

37. Two-dimensional view of the figures on the neck.



38. *Heracles battling the Hind of Ceryneia.*



39. *Theseus battling the Marathon Bull.*



40

40. The heads
of the two animals.

tion about their names. The handle ends in the lower part in the shape of beautiful woman's head (Fig.35).

The neck of the other stag-headed rhyton (Fig.36) illustrates two feats performed by two mythological heroes (Fig.37) arranged in almost heraldic order: Heracles' victory over the Ceryneian hind (Fig.38) and Theseus' battle with the Marathon bull (Fig.39). The scenes are rendered with great realism and show the intense atmosphere of the deadly battles. There is a slight contradiction between the portrayal of



41

41. Rhyton shaped
as he-goat's protome.

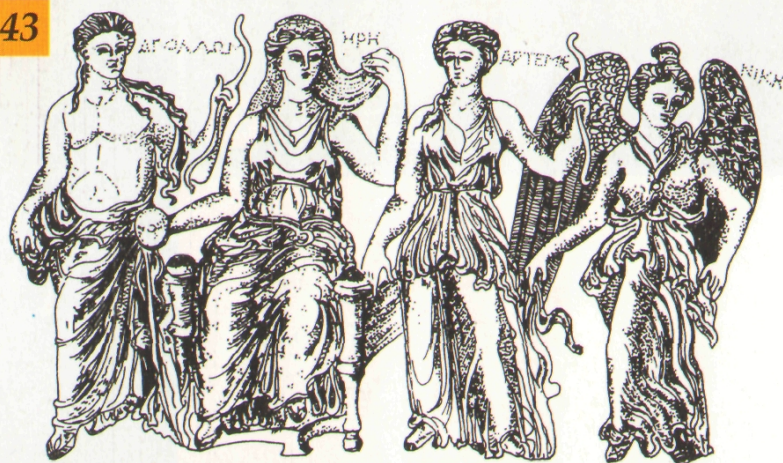


42. He-goat's head.

the human and the animal bodies. Typically for Thracian art, the animal figures are modelled with greater freedom and vocation than the human ones (Fig.41).

The rhyton with he-goat (Fig.41) sculptures the whole front part of the animal body (Fig.42). It is the only vessel in the treasure without handles because its long and narrow neck can be held easily. The neck illustrates a scene with four figures (Fig.43), and one should note that the number of participants is repeated many times. In the middle

43



43. Two-dimensional view of the figures.



44. Hunting-goddess Artemis,
on her left Zeus' wife Hera.

44



45

45. Apollo.

Zeus' wife Hera is seated on a throne. On her left side is standing Artemis, the goddess of hunting (Fig.44), portrayed with the typical for her bow held by her left hand. On Hera's right side there is Apollo, also holding a bow (Fig.45). On the back part of the neck there is the winged goddess of victory Nike with ribbon in her right hand (Fig.46). All details of the bodies, clothing and attributes are rendered with pedantic care. The figure of Nike is modelled more expressively and dynamically of all.

There are three rhytons shaped as female, probably amazons' (female warriors), heads (Figs.47, 49 and 52). The women's necks are long and bare but widen downward into the base of the vessel which bears an incised necklace with pendants. The central pendant is shaped as a lion's head medallion with opening in the mouth (Fig.48). The handles end upwards into sphinx' bodies,



46. Nike



47

47. First rhyton
shaped as female head,
amazon's.

48. Neck with necklace
and opening
for pouring wine.



48

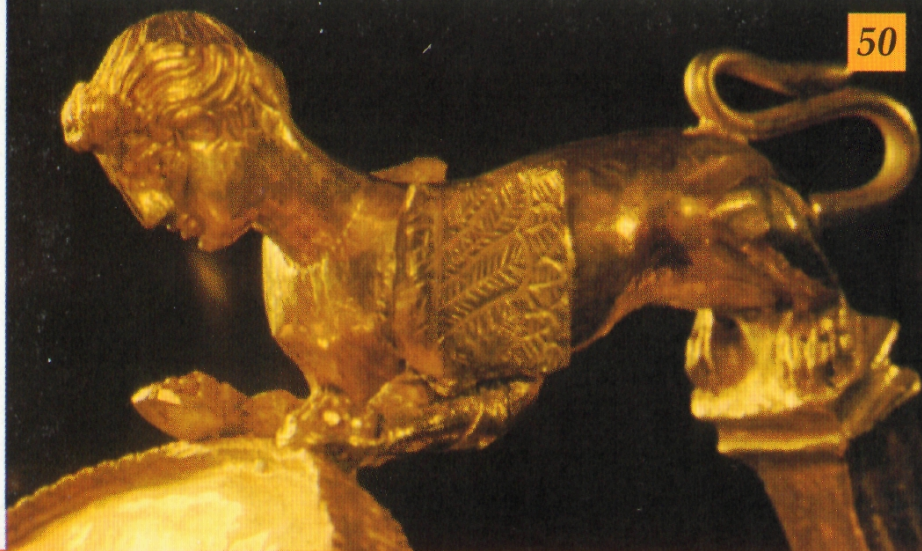
the wings of one of them have been cut off and are missing (Fig.50). In two of the rhytons the elaborate hair-cuts are covered with veils which gather the hair on the neck, decorated with wave-like bands, small stars and dots grouped in three (Fig.51). In stead of a veil, the head of the third rhyton bears a long helmet (Figs.52, 53). It is very important to note that it curves slightly forward. If it had been modelled to the top, it would have born the characteristic outline of the Thracian type of helmet. Both side surfaces are occupied



49

49. Second rhyton shaped
as amazon's head.

50. Rhyton's handle
with sphinx torso
whose wings were cut off.



50

by two incised arranged heraldical-ly griffins with savage countenance (Figs. 54, 55). A similar helmet, but made of bronze, is preserved in the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia.

With a weight of 864 g and diameter of 25 cm the phiale (Figs. 56 and 62) from the Panagyurishte treasure is the largest and heaviest known so far from the ancient world. Its decoration is no less unique. Around its smooth omphalos protruding upward (Fig. 57)



51

51. Back view of the same rhyton showing the veil decoration.

there are arranged four concentric circles, each of them consisting of 24 ornamental elements made in such a way as to be seen from without. The closest to the centre is the circle of acorns (Fig.58), the other three are of Negroes' heads (Fig.61), increasing in size in the next circle (Fig.62) The patterns hammered from with-



52

52. Third rhyton shaped as amazon with Thracian type of helmet.



53

53. Amazon's face.



54

54. One of the griffins on the helmet's wall.

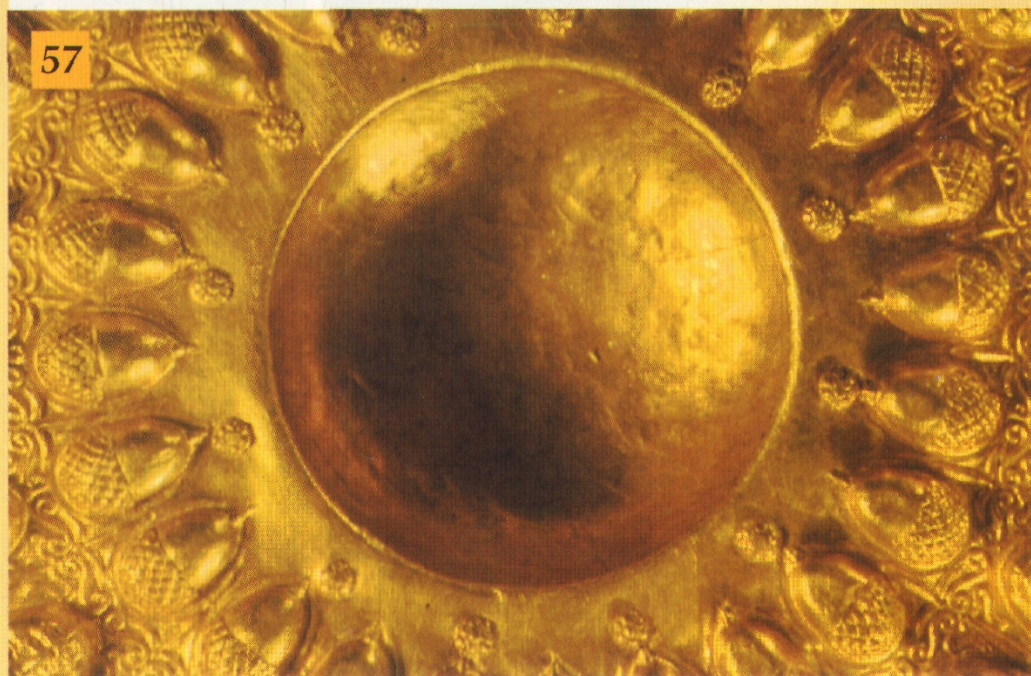


55

55. Griffins' heads on the helmet.



56. *Phiale*
for drinking of wine.



57. Centre of the phiale:
protruding omphalos.



58. *Acorns of the first concentric circle.*



59. *Phiale from the outside.*



60. *Palmette between two Negroes' heads.*

61. *Negro's head
from the phiale decoration.*

60

out render "negative" images from within. All free surfaces are decorated with floral ornaments: blossoms of lotus and palmettes (Fig.60).

The phiale was used for drinking of wine. The action was mystified by both physical and psychological properties of gold. Once poured inside, the liquid immediately turns ice-cold due to the highest conductive quality of gold. Thracians adored red wine. While used for drinking, the phiale bent to the face of the drinker and he could see how the closest to him Negroes'

61



62. Detail of the four concentric bands.

63. Silver decoration for horse head: lapis (Mramor mound near Panagyurishte).

63



62



heads take the liquid and turn dark red, while those at the back gradually change their colour from red to yellow. In the remotest from his face Negroes' heads the wine stayed only in the openings for the eyes and mouths, thus making them blink light red against the yellow glitter of the noble metal. The impact on the drinker must have been sensational, making him feel as if he devoured a magical drink worth for gods. Being very expensive and hard to wear, made of solid gold, the vessels from the Panagyurishte trea-



64

64. Silver gilded skyphos
from Strelcha
with exquisitely
worked decoration.

65. Temple in Horizont
mound nearby Starosel.



65

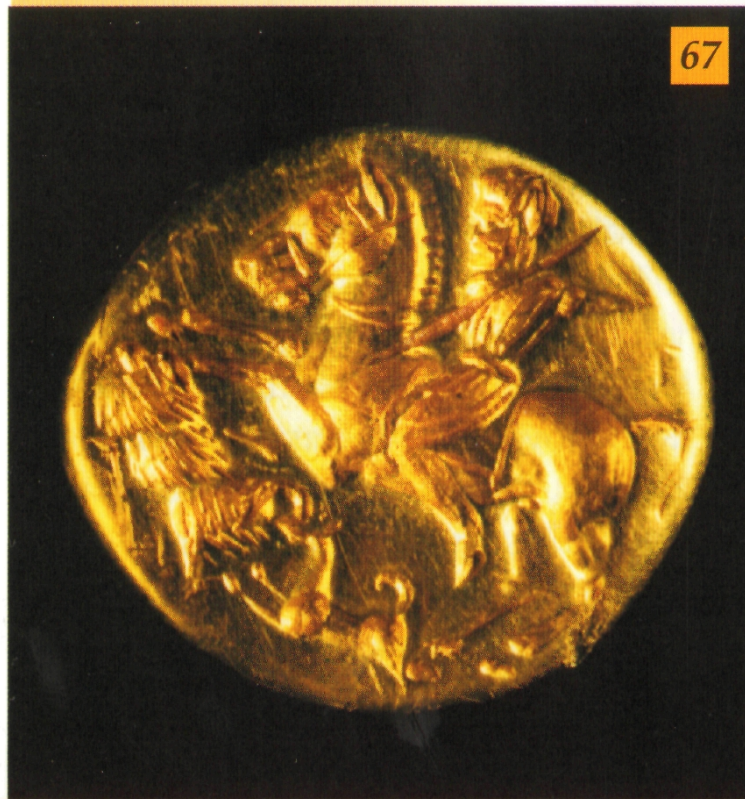
sure must have been used at least for several decades. The stylistic analysis of the figures gives us ground to believe that the time of its manufacture must have been the second half of the fourth century BC. The moment when it was hidden must have taken place the following century.

The Panagyurishte plain, and the nearby Strelcha plain, are very rich in natural and strategic benefits. Cozily tucked by the southern slopes of Sredna Gora Mountain,

66. Imposing Thracian temple
in Chetinyova mound
nearby Starosel.

67. Gold ring-stamp
from Peychova mound
nearby Starosel.

68. Gold breast-piece from Strelcha
with double pearl-like repousse
and schematic figures.



they have attracted human attention since remotest antiquity with their fertile land, profusion of water and mineral springs, dense forests. A plenty of Thracian settlements, still not excavated, and hundreds of tumuli bring evidence to the fact that in this region we should look for an important political and cultural centre. This is the only plausible explanation for the discovery of the treasure, as well as of the find rich in gold and silver decorations and bronze vessels from Mramor locality near Panagyurishte dating from fifth century BC, the most representative under-tumuli temple-mounds near Strelcha, and many others.

One cannot but notice the stylistic unity of the finds from the district of Panagyurishte. The decorations from Mramor (Fig.63) and the gold breast-piece from Strelcha (Fig.68) are so far the only finds from Thrace with double pearl-like repousse on the rim. The human and

animal figures are rendered slightly carelessly and schematically, as are those on the bottom of the amphora-rhyton. There is one detail from the Strelcha breast-piece which is particularly important. When the goldsmith cut the gold foil he must have made two successive movements which resulted in a hardly visible protruding piece which broke off a few minutes after its discovery. This fact testifies that the decoration was not meant for combat wearing and that it must have been made in a nearby workshop. Another reason for the existence of a Thracian art workshop in the district of Panagyurishte are the copper, gold and silver mines for which we know to have functioned in antiquity. This workshop must have used the services of differently qualified masters who manufactured the slightly careless decoration on the breast-piece from Mramor, maybe also the decoration on the bottom of

the amphora-rhyton, but at the same time the high artistic value figures on the skyphos from Strelcha (Fig.64), one rhyton from Poroyna, Romania, and why not the whole treasure from Panagyurishte.

Regarding the origin of the Panagyurishte treasure, there are actually two main hypotheses. They have been based on the interpretation of several incised letter signs on some of the vessels which are believed to denominate the weight of gold in measurement units. The more popular hypothesis says that these signs follow the measurement system used by the Asian Minor town of Lampsakos. Others scholars, however, have established that a similar system evolved in inner Thrace and that it could be used for denomination of gold as well. Therefore there is ground to speak in favour of the local origin of the treasure, all the more it is supported by the stylistic analysis of the figures,

scenes, choice of heroes portrayed in those scenes, and some of the cited-above peculiarities.

If this supposition appears to be too far-fetched, we have to remind that within the region between Panagyurishte and Hissar hundreds of tumuli had been piled up which might keep many unknown objects of art. Their excavation will yield new arguments for the scholars who believe that not only the Panagyurishte treasure was manufactured in the heart of Thrace, but that it was worked by Thracian masters.

During only the last three years, namely 2000, 2001 and 2002, some exceptional discoveries have taken place, which establish the region in question as one of the centres of Thracian state and culture. In the vicinity of the village of Svoboda, unfortunately after treasure-hunter's looting, some representative under-tumuli finds have been excavated. The Thracian cult centre at

Starosel has recently been investigated to prove that within less than 80 sq km there are six monumental under-tumuli temples, four of them really unique (Figs. 65 and 66). In some of the newly discovered mounds there appeared kingly graves with marvelous objects of art made of gold, silver, bronze, clay, alabaster and other materials. In Peychova mound only, near Starosel, there had been lain in the grave of a warrior-aristocrat from mid-fourth century BC three silver sets of horse trappings decorations with stylized animal figures, as well as gold jewellery (Fig. 67), decorated silver and bronze vessels, local and imported ceramic vessels, full armament set and some other finds. Not far from Starosel, near Duvanli, there is the richest known Thracian mound necropolis. All these artifacts make us not surprised at all, as were the finders in 1949, by the discovery of the treasure near Panagyurishte and give us reasons to make the conclu-

sion that it excellently and naturally fits the cultural and historical background of the region.

The Panagyurishte treasure, a phenomenal monument of ancient art, testifies not only to the exceptional talent of its masters, but it is an evidence for the closeness of Thracian society, and more specifically of its political and religious elite, to the tendencies of unification followed by ancient civilization. It is a work with enormous importance for history and world art, a treasure which gives legitimacy to the Thracians as bearers of highest artistic and technical traditions which is their contribution to the development of culture of the Balkan peoples.

Selected publications on the Treasure of Panagyurishte

1. Л. Ботушарова. Мнения за златното съкровище от Панагюрище според досегашните проучвания. - Год. на музеите в Пловдивски окръг, III, 1960, с. 357 - 359.
2. Ив. Венедиков. Панагюрското съкровище. - С. 1962.
3. Ив. Венедиков. Панагюрското златно съкровище (Албум). - С. 1961.
4. Г. Китов. Амфората-ритон и произходът на Панагюрското съкровище. - Анали, 6, 1999, кн. 1 - 4, 12 - 34.
5. Г. Китов. Панагюрското златно съкровище отблизо. - С. 2000.
6. К. Колев. Тракийското Панагюрско златно съкровище. - Сп. Тракия, 1976, кн. 3, с. 170 - 187.
7. Ив. Маразов. Кентаври, сфинксове, амазонки, негри. За семантиката на "чуждия" в образната програма на панагюрските съдове. - Сп. Анали, 1999, кн. 1 - 4, с. 35 - 45.
8. Ив. Маразов. Ритоните в древна Тракия. - С. 1978, с. 76 - 109, обр. 75 - 108.
9. П. Тотева. Нови мнения за Панагюрското златно съкровище. - Год. на Нар. археол. музей в Пловдив, VII, 1971, с. 159 - 167.
10. Д. Цончев, П. Горбанов. Находка от античен златен сервиз за пие-не при Панагюрище. - Год. на Нар. археол. музей в Пловдив, II, 1950, с. 243 - 246.
11. Д. Цончев. Новооткрито златно съкровище. - ИАИ XVII, 1950, с. 196.
12. D. Concev. Der GoLdschatz von Panagjuriste. - Mon. arch., CAV, Praha 1956, 115.
13. K. Kolev. Scenes thraces sur l'amphore-rhyton du tresor d'or de Panaguriste. - Pulpudeva 1, 1976, 137 - 142.
14. Iv. Venedicov. Sur la date et origine du tresor de Panaguriste. - Acta ant. Acad. Hung. VI, 1 - 2, 1958, , 67 - 82.

Exposition of the Panagyurishte treasure:

- December 8th 1949: improvised show-case in Panagyurishte
- 1949-1960, People's Archaeological Museum, Plovdiv
 - Exhibition "2500-Year Art In the Bulgarian Lands"
- 1961, Rome, Paris, Munich, Neauchattle
- 1962, Moscow, Leningrad, Sofia /the Crypt of Alexander of Neva Cathedral/
- 1963-1971 People's Archaeological Museum, Plovdiv
 - Exhibition "Thracian Art and Culture in the Bulgarian Lands"
- 1972, Sofia
- 1974, Paris
- 1975, Vienna
- 1975/76, London
- 1976, Sofia, Warsaw
- 1977, Havana, Mexico City, New York, Boston, Belgrade
- 1978, Berlin, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest
- 1979, Bucharest, Tokyo, Nagoya, Okayama, Cologne, Munich, Hildesheim
- 1980, Stockholm, Geneva, New Delhi
- 1981-1984, People's Archaeological Museum, Plovdiv
 - Exhibition "Panorama of Bulgarian Culture", 1984, Sofia
- 1984, Permanent exposition of the National Museum of History, Sofia

- 1984, Rotterdam
- 1984-1987, Permanent exposition of the National Museum of History, Sofia
- 1987, "The Gold of the Thracian Riders", Montreal
- 1988, "The Treasures of Bulgaria, Madrid, Seville
- 1989, "Thracians: Art and Culture", Venice
- 1992, "The Gods of Thracians", National palace of Culture, Sofia
- 1994, "The Riches of the Thracian Rulers", Sofia, Varna, Pleven
- 1994/95, "The Riches of the Thracian Rulers", Japan
- 1996/97, "Seven Thousand Years of Goldsmith Art in Bulgaria", Vicenza (Italy)
- 1997, "The Treasures of Bulgaria", Upsala (Sweden)
- 1998/99, "Ancient Gold", The United States: Saint Louis, Fort Worth, San Francisco, New Orleans, Memphis, Boston, Detroit
- 2000, Helsinki
- 2000-2002, Permanent exposition of the National museum of History, Sofia
- 2002/03, "The Gold of the Thracians", EUROPALIA, Brussels
- 2003, Permanent exposition of National Museum of History, Sofia

Georgi Kitov
THE PANAGYURISHTE TREASURE

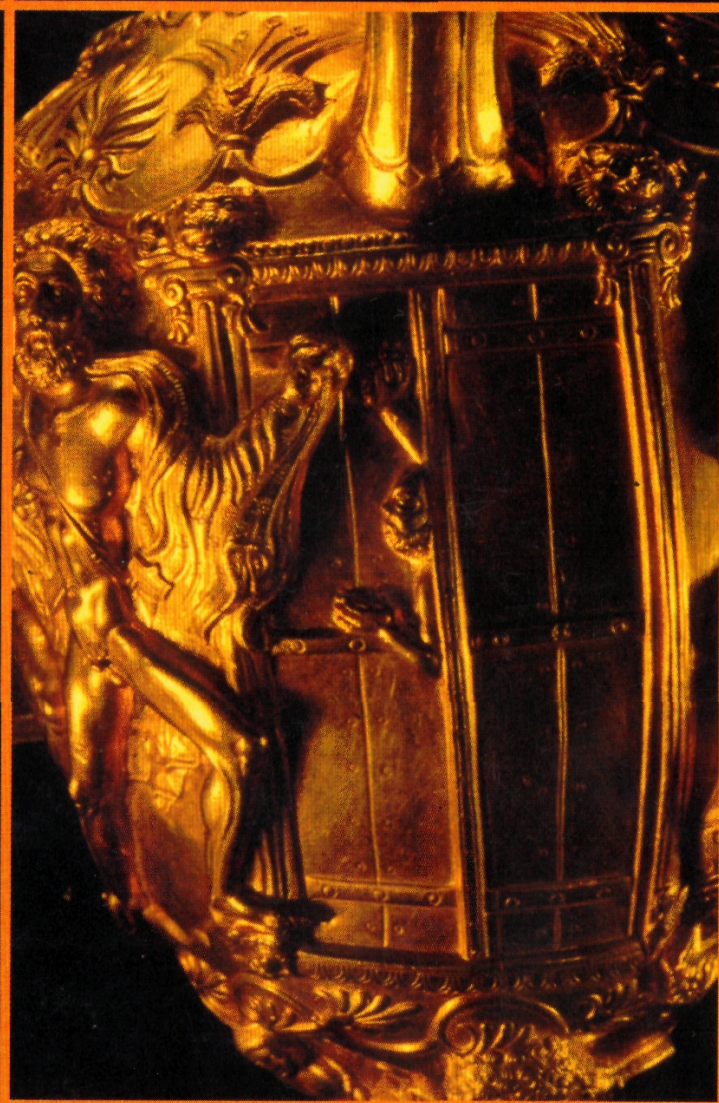
Author
Georgi Kitov

Fotos
Georgi Kitov, Mario Filipov, Ian Bouzek,
Alexander Dudly, Stefan Dimov

Graphical design
Snejina Stancheva, Peter Jelev

ISBN 954-579-297-3

Publishing house "Slavena"
e-mail: slavena@triada.bg
www.slavena.net



price 4 лв./2 €